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PHL 110E.03: Introduction to Ethics

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Philosophy 110: Introduction to Ethics

Professor Matthew Strohl

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Course description:

This course is a broad introduction to moral philosophy. We will cover topics in metaethics, normative ethics, and applied ethics. Readings will be drawn from both historical and contemporary sources.

Required textbook:

Ethics: History, Theory, and Contemporary Issues, 4th edition, ed. Steven M. Cahn and Peter Markie, Oxford University Press 2009

Grading and exams:

There will be two in-class short answer exams and a final exam. The first 2 exams will each be worth 20% of your grade. The final exam will be worth 40%. It will be cumulative but will emphasize material from the last part of the course. The other 20% of your grade will be for attendance and participation in discussion section.

It is a massive pain to give make-up exams for a class this large. Please be considerate to us and do your best to take the exams when they are scheduled. Unless you receive permission from me at least two weeks in advance, make-up exams will be given only in the case of a legitimate emergency.

Documentation of your excuse is required in order to make up an exam. Exams not taken, for any reason, will receive a zero. *If you have a problem, contact me as soon as you know you have a problem!*

A note about attendance and etiquette:

We will not be keeping track of lecture attendance, because it would be a giant hassle and because we'd like to treat you like adults. It's just an hour and forty minutes a week (at a delightfully early hour) and the material is interesting. Take advantage of the opportunity. Come to class. You'll do a lot better if you come, I promise.

Please do not text during class. Please do not mess with your phone during class. I do not want to see your phone during class! Is that clear enough?? I get the sense sometimes that students feel like they become invisible when they're in a class this large and I can't see them texting. False. I can see it. I

don't lecture from notes. I speak extemporaneously, and that takes a lot of focus. When I see someone messing with their phone, it distracts me. Sometimes I completely lose my train of thought and it throws me off my game. Perhaps I'm too sensitive to such things, but in any case, it's real. So I'm asking you nicely to please keep your phone out of sight for the 50 minutes you're in my class. I know some of you are going to do it anyways, and I'm already annoyed. I will call you out in an embarrassing manner if necessary.

I prefer that you not use a laptop in class, but if you really need one to take notes, please sit in the back.

If you need to leave early, please sit somewhere where you can leave without causing a commotion.

Academic misconduct:

You are strictly held to the University of Montana Student Conduct Code (<http://www.umt.edu.SA>). The in-class exams are closed-note: you may not consult anything but your own mind in order to answer questions on the exam. You may not use cell-phones, or any electronic devices to aid you, nor fellow students, nor fellow students' answers on exams, etc. You will receive no credit for any exam that you cheat on. Your conduct will also be reported to the Dean.

Special needs:

Students with disabilities will receive reasonable modifications in this course. Please speak with me after class or during my office hours if you need to make special arrangements. Your responsibilities are to request them from me with sufficient advance notice, and to be prepared to provide verification of disability and its impact from Disability Services. If you are going to take the final at DSS, please schedule it well in advance, as the time slots fill up quickly. Please speak with me after class or during my office hours if you need to make special arrangements. For more information, visit the Disability Services for Students website at www.umt.edu/dss/

Readings:

1/29 Hi, I'm Matt, here's your syllabus, see you Thursday.

1/31 Plato, *Republic*, Book II, 357a-369c

2/5 Plato, *Republic*, Book IV

2/7 cont.

2/12 Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, Book 1

2/14 cont.

2/19 Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, Book 2

2/21 cont.

2/26 Hobbes, *Leviathan*, Chapters XIII-XIV

2/28 Feinberg, "Psychological Egoism"

3/5 **Exam 1**

3/7 Bentham, *An Introduction to the Principles of Morals and Legislation*

3/12 Mill, *Utilitarianism* II

3/14 Mill, *Utilitarianism* III, V (only worry about pg. 355 for Chapter V)

3/19 Williams, "A Critique of Utilitarianism"

3/21 Kant, *Groundwork* I

3/26 cont.

3/28 Kant, *Groundwork* II (Warning: extremely difficult)

4/2-4/4 spring break

4/9 cont.

4/11 cont.

4/16 **Exam 2**

4/18 Rawls, *A Theory of Justice*, 3, 4, 11, 24, 40

4/23 Singer, "Famine, Affluence, and Morality"

4/25 Arthur, "Famine Relief and the Ideal Moral Code"; Amartya Sen handout (distributed in class)

4/30 Thomson, "A Defense of Abortion"

5/2 Warren, "On the Moral and Legal Status of Abortion"

5/7 Marquis, "An Argument that Abortion is Wrong"

5/9 Rachels, "The Challenge of Cultural Relativism"

Final exam: 8-10am, Thursday, May 16th in Urey Lecture Hall.